

20 March 1976

## Drip, Drip, Drip

The House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct inadvertently chose an odd week in which to begin its labors on the Congressional "leak" of, to, by or from Daniel Schorr. It was the week in which *Foreign Policy* carried an article revealing very specific inside knowledge (including verbatim quotes or minutes from conversations with Middle Eastern leaders), of the "genius" of Henry Kissinger. (The author of the article, Edward Sheehan, a former foreign service officer, after two conversations with the Secretary of State, describes Kissinger as "at the apogee of his genius" in handling the matter of war and peace in the Middle East.) The extravagant compliment is one notoriously reliable giveaway of a hidden source.

Sheehan, who talked with several policy people in the State Department, will not say who provided the circumstantial tidbits and Kissinger, incredibly enough, denies any knowledge that they had been divulged—that is, leaked. He has to because he has been thundering against leaks from Congress on "national security" matters. And now that *Foreign Policy* has spread his "genius" before the world (it seems to have consisted substantially of telling the Arabs that the United States was going to pressure the Israelis into withdrawal from occupied territory), Kissinger is calling the seepage from his own shop "gross," both as to "breach of confidence" and to "error of judgment."

Now, there are various kinds of leaks, as we are learning with every day's news. There are leaks that are good for the country and leaks that are bad. The good leaks, otherwise known as "authorized leaks," tend to shed luster on the leaker, always a "high official" of the administration. Henry Kissinger is the world champion of this sport. In his various disguises for the role, he has played "a high official on the plane" (when he's shuttling), "a high State Department official" or "high administration sources"—whether on the ground or in the air, he is always "high."

The bad leaks, the "gross" ones, are those that let Congress and the public in on information to which the administration does not feel they should be privy—generally showing its activities to be discreditable, dangerous or less than brilliant. Some of the grosser ones are contained in a book by the Israeli journalist Matti Golan, initially stopped from publication by Israel's military censors but now, for unexplained reasons, released. The

book may make the Secretary of State prefer the Golan Heights, with all the problems it has given him, to the author of the same name. This work contains a classic example of Kissinger's philosophy of porousness in international relations.

At a delicate moment in U.S.-Israel negotiations on the question of withdrawal from the Golan Heights, an Israeli diplomat "delicately commented" that the troublesome leaks from these tense talks seemed to be coming from the American side. Thereupon Kissinger "went wild," Golan writes. "You blame the Americans?" he asked incredulously. The journalists who accompanied him, he said, knew nothing except what he told them. And he only told them what served the negotiations." Two groups have a right to be annoyed at the American Secretary of State's egocentrism in this incident—the Israelis, who must have had a different view of what "served the negotiations," and the American journalists, who were being so boldly used by Kissinger for his own purposes.

It is against this background that the House committee prepares to explore how one reporter, Daniel Schorr of CBS News, managed to get hold of, keep and have published a copy of the Pike Committee's report on intelligence operations, more than 2,000 of which were floating around Washington until the House, paralyzed by the executive branch's intimidation by leak, decided to bow to the pressure and bury the report. The House "ethics" committee, as it is known for short, which had no staff and no observable function until the Schorr case came along, is now authorized to hire a staff of twenty-five and spend \$350,000 to tackle one lone reporter. It is even considering "contempt" citations if it can find